



Congressman Dan Lipinski

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Public Document

Official Business



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Dan Lipinski

M.C.
Presorted Standard

Congressman Lipinski's Year-End Wrap Up

Representative Lipinski's Congressional Medicare Prescription Drug Seminars

<u>Wednesday - Dec. 28th</u> Senior Center 5330 W. 95th Oak Lawn 10:00 am	<u>Wednesday - Dec. 28th</u> City Hall 4331 Southwest Hwy. Hometown 12 Noon	<u>Tuesday - Jan. 3rd</u> Bedford Park Library 7816 West 65th Pl. Bedford Park 10:00 am	<u>Tuesday - Jan. 17th</u> North Medical Center 6721 West 40th St. Stickney 9:00 am	<u>Wednesday - Jan. 18th</u> Lou Viverito Senior Center 7745 S. Leamington Burbank 10:00 am	<u>Monday - Jan. 23rd</u> Central Clinic 4949 S. Long Ave. Central Stickney 10:00 am	<u>Wednesday - Feb. 15th</u> Westchester Park District 10201 Bond St. Westchester 11:00 am	<u>Thursday - Feb. 23rd</u> YMCA 2947 S. Oak Park Berwyn 10:00 am
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Helping Seniors With The Medicare Prescription Drug Program



Congressman Lipinski educates 3rd District seniors about the new Medicare Prescription Drug Program.

Medicare recipients are now able to enroll in the new Medicare Prescription Drug Program which is a necessary and overdue addition. However, the complexity of the program and the short enrollment period pose a great difficulty for seniors who are trying to choose the best plan for them. Congressman Lipinski is working to help by holding informational seminars at various locations across the district and by supporting legislation to make the program better, less costly, and simpler to enroll in.

Under current law, most Medicare beneficiaries must sign up for a drug plan by May 15th, 2006, or be charged a late enrollment penalty. Also, once you sign up you will be unable to change to a different plan until 2007, even though your benefits can be altered by your plan with only 60 days notice. To address these problems Congressman Lipinski is sponsoring the Medicare Informed Choice Act. This bill would eliminate the late enrollment fee in 2006 and give every beneficiary the opportunity to make a one-time change in plan enrollment at any point in 2006.

In Illinois, beneficiaries must choose from over 60 plans and some of the information provided by Medicare about the program has been faulty. To help ease the burden of making a choice, Congressman Lipinski is offering a series of informational sessions across the Third District. For more information please visit www.house.gov/lipinski or call the Chicago office at (312) 886-0481.

For more information, to share your views, and to sign up for E-News updates from Congressman Lipinski, please visit www.house.gov/lipinski.

Complete and return this card today so Congressman Lipinski can stay in touch with you on important issues.

Please check the 5 issues MOST important to you.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Deficit | <input type="checkbox"/> Family/Life Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drugs and Crime | <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs/Economy | <input type="checkbox"/> Taxes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Prescription Drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> Terrorism/National Security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicare | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans' Issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Iraq War | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

City/Zip _____



***I want to receive e-mail updates from
Congressman Dan Lipinski***

An Important Message From Congressman Dan Lipinski



Dear Friends,

This newsletter provides you with an update on what I have been doing this year to help ease the burdens you and your family face when addressing daily challenges involving issues such as health care, education, jobs, and retirement security.

There was some good news from Congress this year. Efforts to privatize Social Security were successfully blocked. Closer to home, I was able to secure more than \$126 million in funding for transportation projects in and around the Third District including railroad underpasses, street repairs, bridges, and bike/pedestrian paths. In addition, the long-awaited Central Avenue underpass connecting southwest Chicago with the southern suburbs is now closer to groundbreaking.

However, many struggles have continued for American families. In response to skyrocketing healthcare costs, it is essential that Congress work to make health care more affordable. Inside you can read about the continued advancement of my Hospital Price Disclosure Bill which will provide families with price information and help bring down hospital costs. With the prices of gasoline and natural gas soaring this year, families are finding that these essential items are also taking a bigger bite out of their budgets. You can read about my work to lower energy prices, protect consumers, and help families pay these bills.

As the growing trade deficit pushes toward a new record high, Americans are increasingly concerned about their job security and the future of the economy. To help protect American jobs I co-sponsored legislation to stop unfair trade practices, held a roundtable to hear about local small business concerns, and conducted a hearing of the House Small Business Committee in a district factory to help local manufacturers (see story inside).

As a former educator who recognizes the importance of a quality, affordable education, I recently convened an education summit with local school officials to discuss ideas for improving our schools and held a college financial aid seminar to help families pay for higher education. As an engineer concerned with keeping our children technologically competitive in the global economy, I am also an original cosponsor of H.R. 4434, legislation which would increase the number of math and science teachers by 10,000.

The new Medicare Prescription Drug program is an important and necessary benefit for seniors, but it is unnecessarily much too complicated. I am co-sponsoring legislation to make the program better, more affordable, and easier to sign up for. Numerous informational seminars are being offered throughout the district to help guide seniors through the difficult enrollment process.

It is an honor to serve you. As always, be sure to contact any of the offices listed below with questions or problems you might encounter with Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans' Benefits, or any other federal program, as well as your questions about public policy or legislation. Please return the attached feedback card indicating the issues that are most important to you. For additional information and updates, and to sign up to receive E-newsletters, please visit www.house.gov/lipinski.

Sincerely,

Dan Lipinski

Dan Lipinski

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Making Energy More Affordable

This winter Americans are facing sky-high gasoline and natural gas costs and many working families will have to make difficult choices about basic necessities. Congressman Lipinski continues to work for a comprehensive energy policy for the U.S., fighting for legislation that will conserve energy, encourage development of alternative energy, and lower our dependence on foreign sources, as well as helping constituents deal with high prices.

Congressman Lipinski recently joined more than 200 colleagues in opposing H.R. 3893, the so-called "Gas Act," that would harm our environment and public health and give huge tax breaks to an industry already raking in record profits. Instead, he has cosponsored responsible energy legislation including H.R. 4435, legislation aimed to support research that will turn cutting-edge science and engineering into technologies that will reduce our nation's reliance on foreign energy sources by 20% during the next decade. In addition, gasoline price gouging has been a major concern and legislation is in Congress right now to make it easier to prosecute such activities and to discourage the predatory pricing practices of oil companies that raise prices at the pump.

Between 1999 and 2004 the price of natural gas rose 44 percent, and this winter it is expected to be nearly 50 percent higher than last year. In response to this impending problem, Congressman Lipinski participated in a field hearing in October and questioned local natural gas company representatives about the alarming rise in prices, and discussed with state and city officials what can be done to lessen the effect on home heating bills.

LIHEAP, a federal-state partnership that helps seniors and working families pay heating bills, is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Contact the Chicago District office at (312) 886-0481 for assistance. This program has helped many Third District residents get through tough winters and Congressman Lipinski is working in Congress to increase federal funding for this important program.



Congressman Lipinski and Bill Hannigan, Manager of Manufacturing at Solargenix Energy in the 3rd District, listen in as a welder explains the process of constructing a solar collector.

Improving Healthcare Affordability

Congressman Lipinski's Hospital Price Reporting and Disclosure Act has advanced with Senator Richard Durbin's introduction of a companion bill in the Senate. This bill has gained bi-partisan support in both the House and Senate and is expected to come up for a House Committee hearing early next year.

This bill would mandate that hospitals regularly report to the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) the prices charged for the 25 most commonly performed inpatient procedures, 25 most common outpatient procedures, and 50 most frequently prescribed medications in hospitals. HHS would then post the price information on the Internet.

By comparing different health care facilities on a consumer-friendly web site, families can make better choices. When consumers start comparing costs the facilities will respond accordingly, driving prices down. Studies have shown that similar programs that make hospital performance information public encourage quality improvement.



Congressman Lipinski discusses his Hospital Price Bill with medical professionals.

Fulfilling Veterans' Needs

Congressman Lipinski continues to be dedicated to ensuring all veterans get the benefits they deserve due to their unselfish service to our country. This year Congressman Lipinski held a town hall meeting in the district focusing on the needs of area veterans and has lent full support to the following bills:

Enacted Into Law:
• **The Service Members' Group Life Insurance Enhancement Act of 2005.** Prevents a gap in the Service Members Group Life Insurance (SGLI) coverage as well as the Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) program and makes permanent the maximum SGLI/VGLI coverage of \$400,000 (an increase from \$250,000).

Passed by the House:
• **The Service Members' Health Insurance Protection Act of 2005.** Limits premium increases on reinstated health insurance coverage for service members who are released from active duty. Also preserves employer-sponsored health plan coverage for certain Reserve members who acquire TRICARE eligibility prior to activation.

• **HR 3195, The Montgomery GI Bill Second Chance Act.** Creates a yearly open season for military personnel to enroll in the Montgomery GI Bill educational benefits program. Also provides coverage to those previously denied these educational benefits when they enlisted.

• **HR 808, The Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act.** Ends the Military Families Tax which unfairly penalizes the more than 50,000 widows of those who died as a result of their service-connected injuries.



Congressman Lipinski recently discussed veterans' benefits and concerns with Mike Hossack and his family at the Robert E. Coutler American Legion Post in LaGrange.

Saving American Manufacturing Jobs

On September 19th, Congressman Lipinski brought the House Small Business Committee to Archer Wire, a local steel products plant in Bedford Park, to discuss how to save American manufacturing jobs. Joined by Chairman Don Manzullo, the committee heard from more than 20 area business, labor, and government leaders about their experiences and suggestions regarding ways to maintain America's manufacturing base and keep good manufacturing jobs in the Third District. Based on recommendations from the roundtable, Congressman Lipinski will introduce legislation early next year to help American manufacturers. Congressman Lipinski has been a leader in the House this year in fighting unfair trade practices – especially those used by China – and protecting American jobs, including guiding House passage of H.R. 1158 to help American steel producers.



Congressman Lipinski, joined by Chairman Manzullo of the Small Business Committee, listens in as local small business owners share their manufacturing concerns.

Place Stamp Here

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